

August 27, 2010

Dear Superintendents and School Board Members:

I wanted to make you aware that Governor Daniels applied today to the United States Department of Education for the Education Jobs funding recently passed by Congress. All of us should ensure this money is used to improve the quality of education provided to our students.

Indiana has made fiscally responsible decisions that have minimized funding reductions when other states are experiencing drastic multi-year cuts. I continue to hope that further reductions can be avoided. I'm heartened that so many of you found ways to staff your schools appropriately for the academic year without reducing your teaching staffs and without the need for additional funds. A special note of thanks for those who implemented items suggested in the Citizens' Checklist.

The U.S. Department of Education requires the Education Jobs funds be spent by September 2012. With your staffs and budgets set for the 2010-2011 school year, I urge you to be careful with how and when you spend these funds. While record levels of total funding (federal, state and local) have been made available to schools for 2009 and 2010, the next budget cycle will be very difficult. Therefore, please consider reserving this one-time funding until the level of resources budgeted by the General Assembly in the upcoming budget cycle becomes clearer.

In deference to the members of the General Assembly who balance many varying factors in allocating state taxpayer funds to schools, this money will be distributed through Indiana's school funding formula so you will receive these funds in the same proportion as your share of state funding in the current calendar year formula. Allocations may be accessed on the Department of Education web site at www.doe.in.gov/finance.

The federal restrictions on how this funding can be used and the significant expenditure reporting requirements will be provided in a separate communication. Spending will be carefully monitored to ensure that accurate reports can be filed with the U.S. Department of Education detailing how these funds were used to retain, rehire or hire new teachers or support personnel.

The U.S. Department of Education allows these funds to be used for non-classroom costs, such as cafeteria workers, bus drivers and coaches, but it is my preference that this one-time windfall of money be used for classroom activities that will enable our children to receive the best instruction possible while improving the ratio of dollars spent in the classroom. I am confident that you will act in such a manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Bennett', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr. Tony Bennett
State Superintendent of Public Instruction